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185

LACY'S ACTING EDITION



BETSY BAKER

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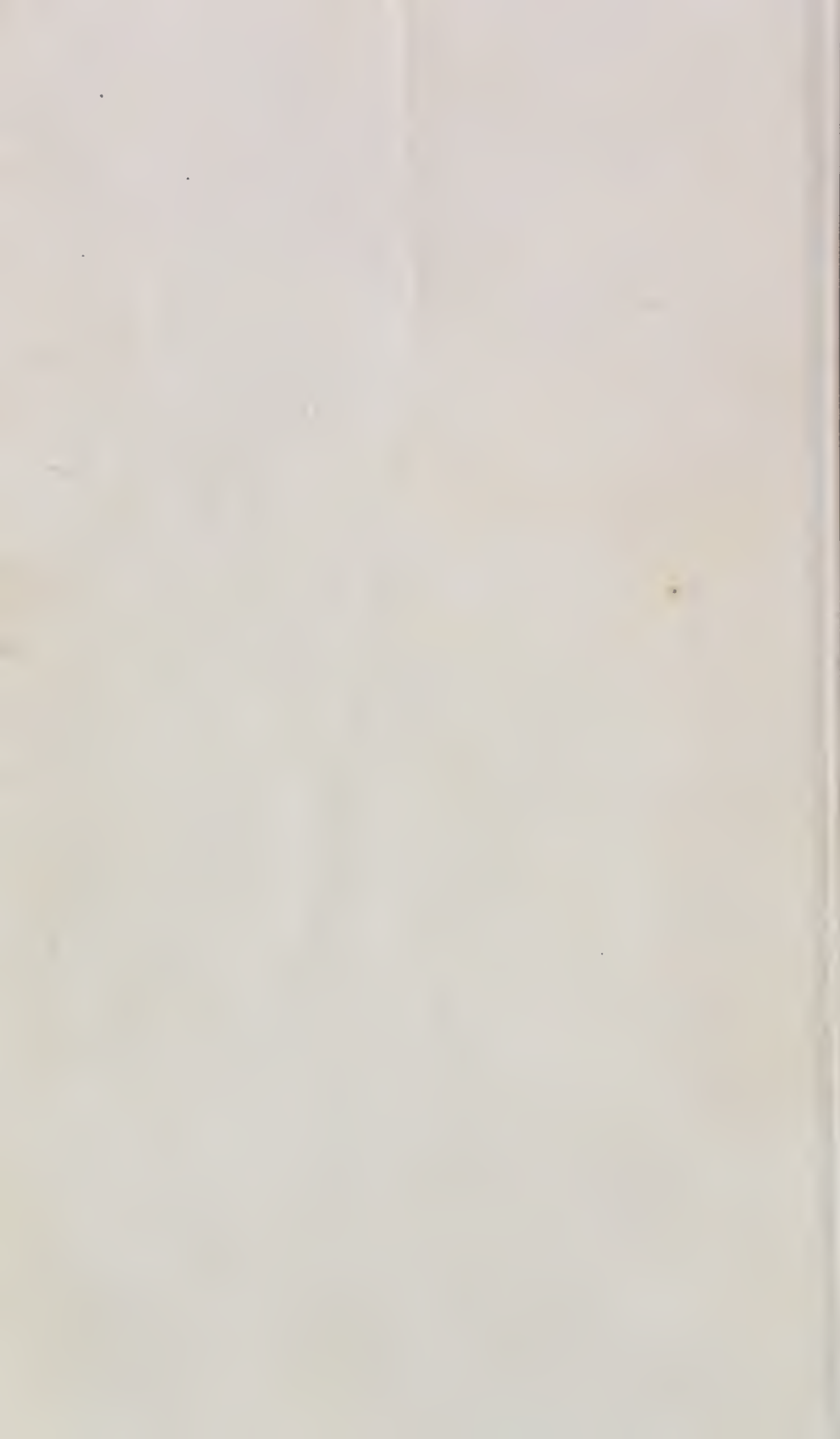
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Betsy Baker.

MOUSER.—Then who was it? I repeat, who was it?

MRS MOUSER. (*Entering.*) Your wife, Sir!

Act I. Scene First.

BETSY BAKER!

OR,

TOO ATTENTIVE BY HALF.

A FARCE.

IN ONE ACT.

BY

JOHN MADDISON MORTON,

Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society,

AUTHOR OF

*Box and Cox, Two Bonnycastles, Who stole the Pocket Book,
The Midnight Watch, Poor Pillicoddy, Going to the Derby, Old
Honesty, Grimshaw, Done on both Sides, Young England,
The King and I, My Wife's Second Floor, The Double-
Bedded Room, Wedding Breakfast, Milliner's
Holiday, The Irish Tiger, Who's the Com-
poser, Who do they take me for, The
Attic Story, Brother Ben, Who's my
Husband, Thumping Legacy,
&c., &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,

LONDON.

*First performed at the Royal Princess's Theatre,
On Wednesday, November 13th, 1850.*

Characters.

MR. MARMADUKE MOUSER	Mr. KEELEY.
MR. CRUMMY	Mr. J. VINING.
MRS. MOUSER	Miss MURRAY.
BETSY BAKER (<i>a Laundress</i>)	Mrs. KEELEY.

Costumes.

MOUSER—Shawl pattern dressing gown, light brown vest, and fashionable dark grey check trousers. *Second Dress*—Exchanges gown for dark blue coat.

CRUMMY—Fashionable black Oxonian coat, light drab vest, and light grey trousers.

MRS. MOUSER—White muslin dress with amber satin ribbons over an amber satin dress, fashionable lace cap, &c.—*Second Dress*—Light blue silk mantilla over the above, white silk drawn bonnet.

BETSY BAKER—Pink print dress with very short sleeves, laundress's blue check apron, neat laced boots.

Time in Representation—45 minutes.

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B E T S Y B A K E R !



SCENE.—*A handsomely furnished Apartment. Doors in flat, R. and L. C. Another door, L. 2 E. Piano-forte, table, chairs, &c.*

MRS. MOUSER *seated at table, working.* MOUSER, *in a dressing gown, seated at piano-forte, R.*

MOUS. (*accompanying himself, and singing*)

“On the margin of fair Zurich’s waters,
Ya—oo—oo!”

That isn’t quite the thing. (*repeating*) Ya—oo—oo! That’s more like it!

MRS. M. (*throws down her work*) This is really intolerable! I wish you wouldn’t attempt to sing that song, Mr. Mouser. You’ll never accomplish it.

MOUS. I *will* accomplish it, Mrs. Mouser. Indeed, I may say, I *have* accomplished it—all, except the “Ya—oo—oo,” and I’m not going to be beat by a “Ya—oo—oo,” I can tell you. No, Mrs. Mouser, I’ll accomplish that “Ya—oo—oo,” if I die for it! (*very loud, and out of tune*) “Ya—oo—oo!” No—that’s worse than ever.

MRS. M. It’s quite clear that you are determined to annoy me. (*pouting*)

MOUS. (*comes down quickly; very tenderly*) Annoy you? You, my Anastasia? You? Pooh!

MRS. M. I’ve told you a hundred times, Marmaduke, that you haven’t a single note in your voice.

MOUS. Then the more creditable in your Marmaduke to try and get a few. (*in a solemn tone*) Anastasia, we live in a wonderful age. Every thing we see above us, below us, and all round about us, proclaims the triumph of mind over matter.

MRS. M. (*yawns slightly*) Well, I don’t deny it, do I?

MOUS. You *can’t* deny it. Look at the Railroads—oblige me by looking at the Railroads, with their gigantic viaducts, their stupendous aqueducts—look at the Electric Telegraph over the Straits of Menai—look at the Tubular Bridge under the Straits of Dover! And how—how is this done? By perseverance—by determination! And shall I flinch from a paltry obstacle? Never! So here goes again! (*very loud*) “Ya—oo—oo!”

MRS. M. (*listening*) Hark!

MOUS. What?

MRS. M. I thought I heard my dear Cousin Crummy outside. But of course that would give *you* no gratification.

MOUS. You wrong me, Anastasia. As long as your Cousin Crummy is outside, and *keeps* outside, I don't care how often I hear him.

MRS. M. (*severely*) Mr. Mouser!

MOUS. Understand me, Anastasia, I mean no disrespect to your Cousin Crummy—on the contrary, Crummy's a man I like—but Crummy's like many other good things in this world, a little of him goes a long way. In short, he gives us too much of his society.

MRS. M. Because he sees we are so much alone.

MOUS. But we never are alone. Crummy won't let us be alone.

MRS. M. Well, isn't it natural that he should drop in upon us? Isn't he your partner in the business? Isn't he one of the firm, Mouser and Crummy, Attorneys-at-law?

MOUS. Yes, and why? Because you chose to fancy that my practice was more than I could get through, and that I required a partner.

MRS. M. I confess I did, and you took him in.

MOUS. I beg your pardon—he took *me* in; and pretty considerably too, for he pockets half the profits, and leaves me all the work.

MRS. M. How can you say so? Isn't he gone out on business now—and all the way to Pentonville, too?

MOUS. All the way from Islington to Pentonville!

MRS. M. Then why didn't you go yourself? (*rises*)

MOUS. And leave *you*, my 'Stasia? (*tenderly*) You that I adore with a degree of intensity closely bordering on insanity! Besides, it isn't because a Mrs. Jones from Northamptonshire—a Jones I don't know—a Jones I never saw—a Jones I never even heard of, chooses to send for me, that therefore I must go to that Jones, Jones can't expect it!

MRS. M. (R.) But no doubt she wishes to consult you on business, and she might prove an excellent client.

MOUS. (L.) I hate business! I hate clients! I hate everything in the world but you, my 'Stasia. What's the world to me? Nothing! What are its "gay and festive scenes, its halls of dazzling light" to me? Nothing! Oh, 'Stasia! 'Stasia!

MRS. M. What nonsense you talk. One would suppose we had only been married a week instead of a year. Has any one been here for me?

MOUS. (*eagerly*) Any one! Not that I know of. Who do you expect?

MRS. M. Why only the laundress with my veil. She promised faithfully to let me have it to-day. When you go out, perhaps you will just call, and say I'm waiting for it. It's only just over the way.

MOUS. Of course, if you insist upon it, I will. But perhaps you're not aware that there are usually from thirty to forty females of various ages and dimensions engaged in that establishment *over the way*, and I don't think it would be exactly the safest place in the world for an unprotected male. Besides, I might be seen entering the premises, and then what would people say? Am I not known in the neighbourhood as the best of husbands? When

we go out don't the people rush to their doors and windows to look at us? Oh, 'Stasy! 'Stasy!

Mrs. M. Ha, ha, ha! My dear Marmaduke, you are certainly getting a little cracked on the subject.

Mous. I know it. I'm so much cracked that I wonder I don't fall to pieces. But I can't help it. (*placing his arm round her waist*)

CRUM. (*without, L. D. F.*) Oh, Mouser's at home, is he? Particularly engaged, d'ye say? Pooh, pooh! I know better.

Mous. (*aside*) I shall do Crummy a terrific injury some of these days. I'm sure I shall.

Enter CRUMMY, L. D. F.

CRUM. (*advancing to MOUSER, C., and giving him a slap on the back*) Ah, Mouser, my boy—sure to find you at home, eh? Ha, ha! Always together, eh? Billing and cooing, and all that sort of thing, eh? (*giving MOUSER a poke in the side*) By-the-bye, I've just come from Mrs. Major-General Jones. She would have nothing to say to me. She insists on seeing the head of the firm, so I told her you'd be with her in a quarter of an hour.

Mous. (R.) Did you? Then you had better go back to Mrs. Jones, and tell her that I shan't do anything of the sort.

CRUM. (C.) But you *must*. Her's is a very important case. Neither more nor less than a separation from her husband, Major-General Jones.

Mous. I'll have nothing to do with it. Major-General Jones has never offended me—what right, then, have I to stand between Major-General Jones and Mrs. Major-General Jones, and say to Major-General Jones, "Major-General Jones, take a last look at Mrs. Major-General Jones, for you'll never set your eyes on Mrs. Major-General Jones again?" It's absurd!

CRUM. But he ill-treats her—games, drinks, squanders her fortune—and, they do say, is not particular as to the number of his attachments.

Mous. (*with a look of horror*) 'Stasy, can such things be? (*drags off his dressing gown, which he throws into CRUMMY's face, who places it on back of chair, R. of table. My coat—my hat—my blue bag—quick! (CRUMMY exits into office, R. D. F.) Oh, the monster! But I'll hold him up to the execration of mankind. "Not particular as to the number of his attachments!" Gracious goodness! And to think that such a man is able to walk the streets without a policeman on each side of him. (CRUMMY returns with hat, coat, and blue bag) But, as I said before, I'll expose him! (in his excitement he puts on the dressing gown again—puts on CRUMMY's hat, and takes CRUMMY's umbrella from table) I shan't be long, my 'Stasia. I shall soon return on the wings of love—(going)*

Mrs. M. (L., *detaining him*) You're surely not going out in your dressing gown?

Mous. Eh? yes—it is my dressing gown, I declare. On second thoughts, I really don't see why I should interfere between these Joneses. (*places hat and umbrella on the table*) I'd rather by half stop with you, my 'Stasy.

CRUM. Nonsense. You must go. Mrs. Major-General Jones expects you. (*taking hold of one of the sleeves of the dressing gown*)

MRS. M. (*taking hold of the other*) Of course—Mrs. Jones expects you.

CRUM. You wouldn't keep a young and pretty woman waiting? (*handing him his coat*)

MOUS. Oh, she's young and pretty, is she? You hear, 'Stasia—she's young and pretty. (*puts on coat*) You expose me to her fascinations, 'Stasia—

MRS. M. (*smiling*) I'm not at all afraid.

MOUS. And why—why are you not afraid? Because, as you must have observed, you no sooner set your foot on the ground than I instantly commence adoring the bit of ground you set your foot on.

MRS. M. (*with impatience*) Yes, yes—but make haste. And you can join me at my sister Charlotte's. You know we drink tea there this evening—

MOUS. Yes, at eight o'clock. But it isn't five yet.

MRS. M. What of that? I promised her to come early—she's teaching me a new pattern in knitting.

MOUS. Yes, I heard her the other day. She was telling you to drop one, and then take up two. She didn't say what, but I must say I was rather surprised at her requesting you to "turn over twice"—especially so soon after dinner.

MRS. M. Ha, ha, ha! Good-byé—for I'm in a hurry to dress.

MOUS. (*detaining her*) One fond embrace before we part! (*kisses her*) Keep up your spirits in my absence. (*going—stops*) Another fond embrace before we part!

MRS. M. (*with evident impatience*) Psha! (*MOUSER going again*) You'll not forget the message about the veil—

MOUS. Certainly not. (*going—stops*) Another fond embrace before—

CRUM. Go along! (*pushes him out, L. D. F.*) Well, coz, you certainly may say you've got the most attentive husband in the world.

MRS. M. Too attentive by half!

CRUM. Eh?

MRS. M. (*seriously*) Yes, cousin. Few women are proof against ridicule—and some husbands would do well to remember that there is a point when attention to a wife becomes a burden, and even affection a persecution. Yes, yes, cousin—he's too attentive by half!

Exit, L. D.

CRUM. "Too attentive by half!" Then it is as I feared, and that simpleton, Mouser, doesn't see that he is persecuting his wife with his affection. She evidently dreads a conjugal tête-à-tête, and no wonder. He never leaves her for a moment; but there he is, eternally and everlastingly at her side, "sighing like furnace," and making himself ridiculous in her eyes. Mischief will certainly come of it. Some remedy must be devised. But what? If I could only contrive to excite Anastasia's suspicions that her hus-

band, like Major-General Jones, is not exactly satisfied with one attachment 'at a time—By this means her jealousy might be roused. But she wouldn't believe *me*. No, Mouser himself must supply the materials. But how? (BETSY BAKER *knocks at L. D. F.*) Come in!

BETSY *appears at L. D. F., with a small parcel.*

BET. Mrs. Mouser's veil——

CRUM. Come in, my dear.

BET. Pattens and all, sir?

CRUM. No. You may leave them outside.

BET. If it's the same to you, sir, I'd rather not.

CRUM. Then take them off, at all events.

BET. Of course, sir. (*takes off her pattens, and comes forward, carrying them in her hand*) It isn't likely I should go for to walk on a carpet, especially when the roads are so dreadful muddy. (*putting her pattens down on table with a slam*)

CRUM. Zounds! Don't put 'em on the table! (*takes pattens from her*)

BET. I'm sure I don't know what to do with 'em, so put 'em where you like.

CRUM. Ha, ha! Heyday! I think I ought to know that face again.

BET. If you ever saw it before, you certainly ought.

CRUM. Have I not met you rather frequently of late, walking of an evening with our young clerk, Joseph Harris?

BET. Yes, sir. We've rather delicate constitutions both of us, so we generally go out for a little fresh air and exercise every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, after work hours. We can't get out any other evenings, sir. I suppose you're Mr. Crummy! You're not Mr. Mouser. We all know *him*!

CRUM. We! Who?

BET. Why, all us girls at the laundry over the way. Ah, there's a pattern for a husband! 'Tisn't every woman, sir, as get's a Mouser. No, sir—Mousers are scarce.

CRUM. And yet you'd take your chance and marry Joseph Harris?

BET. Just try me! And now I think of it, sir, he has told me more than once that you said if ever he found a nice, genteel, respectable young woman that he'd like to marry, you'd do something for him, sir.

CRUM. Oh, then, you, I suppose, are the——

BET. The young woman? Yes, sir, Elizabeth Baker, the youngest of sixteen sisters, and all of 'em girls, sir—and hard-working girls, too, sir. It's worth going over to our laundry to see us, sir. Fancy sixteen Bakers a washing, all of a row!

CRUM. Well, I'll bear my promise in mind.

BET. Don't you think you'd better get it off your mind at once, sir? There's a nice little shop in the greengrocery line, to be let

at the corner of the street—and, as Harris doesn't seem very fond of the law, it would be just the very thing for us.

CRUM. (*aside*) Egad, here's an opportunity for driving a bargain. She's a smart little body enough, and if she can only be induced to act as I direct—I'll feel the ground at all events. (*aloud*) I suppose you've brought Mrs. Mouser's veil? (*pointing to parcel*)

BET. Yes, sir.

CRUM. Mr. Mouser called and told *you* to do so, eh?

BET. He didn't address himself to any of us in particu^{lar}, sir. He just popped his head in at the door, and said, "Mrs. Mouser wants her veil directly," and then took to his heels as if he was frightened to look at any woman but his wife. Lor! what a happy couple they must be!

CRUM. (*with a deep sigh*) Happy! (*solemnly*) They are *not* a happy couple!

BET. Lawks!

CRUM. Yet they might be—but, unfortunately, there is only one person in the world who could make them so.

BET. And who is that?

CRUM. You.

BET. (*with a jump*) Me! I'm sure I'll set about it directly, if you'll only tell me how.

CRUM. I will. (*looks mysteriously about him—BETSY watches him with astonishment—then in a loud whisper*) You must fall in love with Mr. Mouser.

BET. Sir!

CRUM. And Mr. Mouser must instantly fall in love with you.

BET. (*staring at him—then with dignity*) Give me my pattens, sir, and let me go. Give me my pattens, I say.

CRUM. 'Pshaw, ehild! You misunderstand me. Listen! Your sudden passion for Mouser——

BET. (*seizing hold of them, and trying to pull them out of CRUMMY'S hand*)

CRUM. Oh! Very well! It's a pity, too—for a married couple might do very well.

BET. My pattens!

CRUM. At that little greengrocer's shop at the corner of the street.

BET. My pat—(*letting go the pattens*) Well, they're not worth making a piece of work about.

CRUM. (*smiling*) Oh! Then as I was going to say—your passion for Mouser, will, of course, be merely assumed, but you must contrive to make him fall in love with you, in downright earnest.

BET. I can't do it, sir. I wouldn't mind trying, if I wasn't such a dragon of virtue—but I'm sorry to say I am.

CRUM. Then somebody else will.

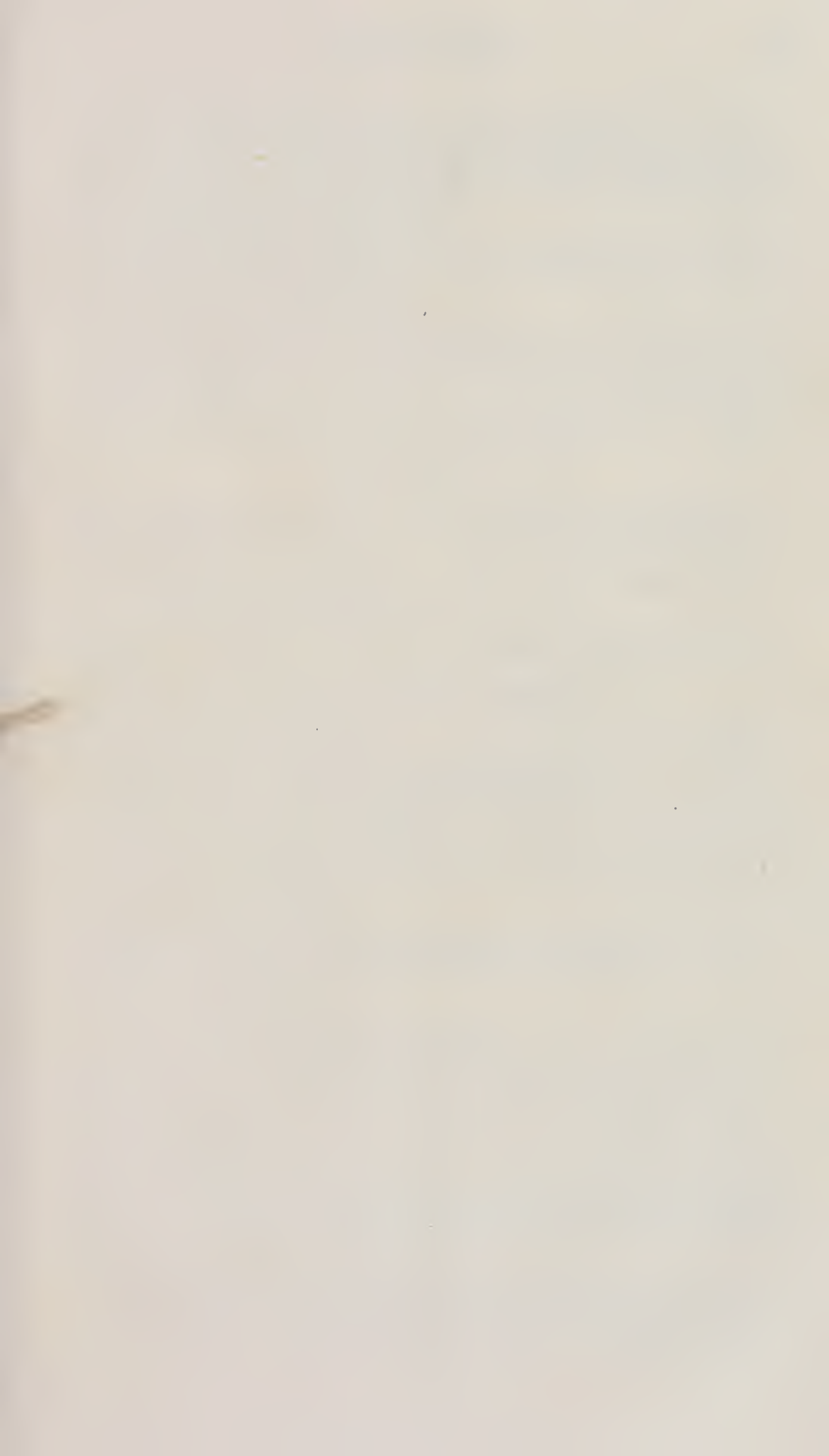
BET. But if he should happen to captivate me?

CRUM. That's your affair.

BET. But why—why am I to do all this?

CRUM. That's my affair.

BET. (L.) But what will Mrs. Mouser say?



CRUM. That's her affair.

BET. But she'll go and imagine all sorts of things.

CRUM. I hope she will. Come, is it a bargain? Will you have Joseph Harris, and the little greengrocer's shop, or will you take your pattens and go? (*offering them*)

BET. You can keep the pattens.

CRUM. Spoken like a sensible girl. (*places pattens in passage, L.C.*) I expect Mouser every minute.

BET. Oh lud! (*about to run off*)

CRUM. Don't run away. (*stopping her*)

BET. But, consider, sir, you can't expect me to act a part at a moment's notice.

CRUM. Then take that veil to Mrs. Mouser, and in a few minutes you can come back, but be sure you *do* come back!

Enter MOUSER, L. D. F.

BET. (*looking at him*) Well, I don't think there's much danger of my falling in love with *him*.

(MOUSER, *who has put his hat, &c., on table, C., turns and sees BETSY, who runs off, L. D.*)

MOUS. (*L., severely to CRUMMY*) Mr. Crummy, what is that young person?

CRUM. Ha, ha! Come, I like that! Go along!

MOUS. But *I* don't like it, sir—neither shall I go along. I repeat, who is that young person?

CRUM. Ha, ha! You do it very well, Mouser—but it won't do—ugh! you Don Juan! (*poking him in the side*)

MOUS. (*after a look of astonishment at CRUMMY, then aside*) Can he have been drinking thus early.

CRUM. But I really think you might have waited till I was out of the room, before you——

MOUS. Before I what, sir?

CRUM. You know—this sort of thing, eh? (*winking at MOUSER*) I suppose you thought I shouldn't see you do it, eh?

MOUS. Do it. Do what?

CRUM. Wink at her,

MOUS. (*with grandeur*) Mr. Crummy!

CRUM. That's right—brazen it out—but let me tell you, sir, I have had my eye upon you and that young woman for some time past.

MOUS. Oh, damn it, I can't stand this! you forget that you're a junior partner, sir.

CRUM. And you forget that I'm your wife's cousin, sir—yes, sir! And I'll not allow you to impose upon her with your pretended affection, you good-for-nothing little hypocrite you, while you carry on an intrigue under her very nose, sir.

MOUS. Nose, sir.

CRUM. No, sir! Neither will I suffer you to trifle with the feelings of one that I'm determined shall not fall into the trap you have

laid, sir. You know who I mean—Baker, sir! (*going round him in front to L.*)

MOUS. I trifle with the feelings of a Baker! I lay a trap for a Baker! You're talking nonsense, Crummy!

CRUM. Come, come. Now that you see I've found you out—tell me how you contrived to wheedle poor Betsy out of her affections?

MOUS. Crummy, I'm not apt to make use of strong language—but—by the living jingo, I never wheedled a Betsy out of anything in all my life!

CRUM. Well, I suppose I must believe you. But, intentionally or not, you certainly have made a most powerful impression on her youthful heart! She confessed as much to me just now.

MOUS. (*gradually dropping his look of indignation, and with self-satisfaction*) Poor Betsy! I'm very sorry for her, I'm sure! I say, Crummy, she's a nieceish little sort of a girl enough.

CRUM. Umph! so, so: (*in a contemptuous tone*)

MOUS. So, so! No, let's be just, Crummy—let's be just. She has good eyes, Crummy, umph?

CRUM. (L.) Squints a little.

MOUS. Does she? I've never noticed her in the slightest degree whatever—but I'm damned if she squints!

CRUM. At any rate her eyes seem good enough to have noticed you. But, knowing you to be free from blame in the matter, I reasoned with her, told her the folly of fixing her affections upon a married man, but all in vain—so you'd better take her in hand.

MOUS. Do you think so?

CRUM. Certainly—you can talk to her seriously, but kindly.

MOUS. Of course, I shouldn't go and behave like a brute to her! I shouldn't go to blow Betsy up.

CRUM. Certainly not—for, after all, the poor girl is more to be pitied than blamed.

MOUS. Crummy, that sentiment does you honour! It shows that the milk of human kindness flows in your bosom, Crummy. (*shaking CRUMMY's hand*)

BETSY. (*without, L. H.*) Very well, ma'am, I'll be sure to remember it.

CRUM. That's her voice! There's something lively and cheerful about it, eh?

MOUS. Yes, yes, it's a pleasant voice, Crummy. (*arranging his cravat, &c.*)

CRUM. She *might* have gone out by the back door, but, of course, she knew that you were here. Ha, ha! (*nudging MOUSER, then retires up*)

MOUS. Pooh! Go along! I believe you're about right, though, 'pon my life I do!

Enter BETSY BAKER, L. D.

BET. (*seeing MOUSER*) There stands my wretched victim! He little knows what's going to happen to him.

CRUM. (*c. aside to BETSY*) Now then, attention! (*aloud*) Well, my dear, Mrs. Mouser was pleased with her veil I hope?

BET. (*crossing c.*) Oh, yes, sir; but in getting it up, somehow or other, I run the iron through it. I suppose I was thinking of something else. (*looking languishingly at MOUSER, then aside to CRUMMY*) How's that?

CRUM. (*aside to her*) Capital!

MOUS. (*in a plaintive tone, and approaching BETSY*) Dear, dear, so you run the iron through it, did you? What a pity!

BET. (*with pretended emotion*) Oh, sir! (*letting the veil fall—aside to CRUMMY*) How's that?

CRUM. (*aside to her*) Can't be better!

MOUS. (*aside*) It's a clear case! Poor creetur! (*picks up the veil, and offers it to BETSY*)

BET. Oh, sir! (*taking the veil, and squeezing his hand*) I've done it! (*aside*)

MOUS. (*aside*) She squeezed my hand!

CRUM. (*to BETSY*) Perhaps you've seen Mr. Mouser before. (*aside to her*) Sigh! (*CRUMMY crosses behind to R. C.*)

BET. Heigho! (*aloud*) Oh yes, sir. I often see Mr. Mouser. I saw him go out yesterday at thirteen minutes past four, and come in again at twenty-seven minutes and a half past five.

CRUM. (*aside to MOUSER*) You see, she counts the very minutes. (*aloud*) This is the young person who's going to marry our elerk, Joseph Harris.

MOUS. Soon? (R.)

CRUM. That depends on her. Harris wishes the marriage to take place immediately, but there seems to be some *slight obstacle* on her part—and, strange to say, she won't tell *me* what it is.

MOUS. (*aside*) The thing's evident. I'm the slight obstaele.

CRUM. Perhaps *you'll* be more fortunate. (*turning L., as going up to L. D. F.*)

MOUS. (*aside to him*) Good graecious, Crummy, don't go, and leave us alone.

CRUM. (*aside to him*) Of eourse! You've done the mischief, and you must repair it. (*to BETSY*) Good bye, my good girl.

BET. (*with pretended alarm*) You're not a-going, sir?

MOUS. Poor soul! She hopes he's not a-going. (*aside*)

CRUM. (*aside to BETSY*) Capitally. Capitally acted, so far. Only carry it on a little longer, and the shop is yours. (*aside to MOUSER*) Did you ever see such a pair of eyes? (*aside, as he goes out, towards L. D. F.*) I'll not lose sight of them. *Exit L. D. F.*

(*MOUSER and BETSY stand at opposite sides of the Stage. Their eyes meet once or twice—she dropping them with emotion, and he drawing himself up and trying to appear indifferent. CRUMMY crosses unseen into Office, R.*)

BET. Poor man! He'll never begin, so I suppose I must. (*aloud*) Sir!

MOUS. (*aside*) Mouser, be firm. No damned nonsense! Do your duty, Mouser, and that duty commands you instantly to plunge a

dagger into the heart that adores you. Well, Miss Baker? (*with great indifference—his back towards her*)

BET. Those as likes me calls me Betsy. (*in a plaintive tone*) Call me Betsy, sir!

MOUS. No, Betsy—I shall not call you Betsy—I never do call people by their christian names, Betsy—never, Betsy! Never, Betsy!

BET. No more do I—unless they're very—very pretty ones indeed, such as John, and Timothy, and Marmadook (*in a tender tone, and approaching him*)

MOUS. (*aside*) Mouser, be firm (*turning to BETSY, and seeing her close to him, begins whistling again. BETSY retires a step or two, and approaches him again*) So, you think Marmadook a pretty name, eh?

BETSY. Yes, sir. I could go on making rhymes to it all day long, as I stand at the washing-tub: just like the man in the play.

There's not a name in any book,
As can compare with Marmadook,
No breeze as e'er the treeses shook,
Sounds half as sweet as Marmadook.

MOUS. (*aside*) It was wrong in me to stop. I feel, it was highly wrong in me to stop. (*aloud*) But remember, you are going to marry a Joseph.

BET. (*with sudden violence, and close to MOUSER*) Never!

MOUS. (*jumping away*) Don't. But why not?

BET. I don't want to marry—I never will marry—I'll live and die a Baker. (*with great energy*)

MOUS. But your reason—your motive—for dying a Baker?

BET. (*with a pathetic look at MOUSER*) Can you ask? You! You? Oh, 'tis too much! Oh! Oh! Oh! (*aside*) I wonder how I'm doing it. (*hiding her face in her hands and sobbing*)

MOUS. Hush! (*tenderly*) Don't cry—don't make such a row, Miss Baker.

BET. Call me Betsy!

MOUS. Very well, Betsy. (*aside*) I've been too firm, Mouser, you've been by many degrees too firm. (*aloud, and taking BETSY'S hand*) Now, don't cry, there's a dear. (*aside*) I called her a dear!

Here CRUMMY looks in from Office, and observes.

There—there—and, now laugh—laugh directly, you little rogue. (*aside*) I called her a little rogue. (*chucks BETSY under the chin*)

BET. (*looking nervously towards the door*) Oh, I think I'd better go now, sir.

MOUS. Don't be in a hurry, Betsy. He, he, he! my pretty little Betsy—for you are pretty—very—very—he, he! (*laughs to himself, aside*) I'm going it! I feel I'm rapidly becoming a horrid, good-for-nothing little rascal! But I can't help it.

BET. (*trying to disengage her hand*) But, sir, what would Mrs. Mouser think?

MOUS. (*recklessly*) Mrs. Mouser may think whatever she likes.

There, what d'ye say to that? Ha, ha, ha! who's afraid? (*suddenly and very loud*) Betsy, embrace your Marmadook.

BET. (*frightened, takes up her pattens, and holds them out, threatening him*)

MOUS. (*rushes at BETSY—she avoids him, leaving the veil in his hand.*)

CRUM. (*without*) Very well, I shall find him.

BET. Oh, lud! (*runs out at door, L. D. F.*)

MOUS. Cousin Crummy! (*follows her to the door, then crams the veil into his pocket and begins to whistle very loud*)

Enter CRUMMY from Office.

CRUM. (R.) Oh, you're alone, are you?

MOUS. Yes, yes. Amusing myself as well as I can. La, la, la! (*singing*)

CRUM. Oh, then, she's been gone some time I suppose?

MOUS. She? who? (*pretending to remember*) Oh, yes—little Betsy—of course—I remember. Ha, ha, ha! How you could have got such an absurd notion into your head, I can't imagine. The girl never even thought of me!

CRUM. (*aside*) The little hypocrite! (*aloud*) Then I must have made a mistake.

MOUS. A mistake of the most gigantic dimensions, Crummy.

CRUM. Well—by the bye, your wife wants her veil. Where is it? (*looking about*) Where's the veil?

MOUS. Veil? Oh, here it is, but you know it wants mending.

CRUM. Oh, never mind a little tear like that.

MOUS. (*tearing a large hole in the veil, aside*) A little tear! It's tremendous! Look here. (*showing it*) So, I'll just leave it with the young woman when I go past—(*aside*)—with a note inside, requesting her to come here this evening, when my wife is out. I'm rushing headlong into all sorts of iniquities! But, as I said before, I can't help it. (*gets hat, &c. from the table*)

CRUM. You're going out again?

MOUS. (*imitating him*) Going out again, what a question! Doesn't Mrs. Major-General Jones expect me?

CRUM. (*smiling*) Again?

MOUS. Yes, sir, again! This case of Jones v. Jones is a very complicated case, sir, and I must get a counsel's opinion.

CRUM. Then, of course, you can't accompany Anastasia to her sister's?

MOUS. Anastasia! Oh, true, I forgot her.

CRUM. (*aside*) Forgot his wife! Better and better. Ha, ha! (*aloud*) Oh, here she comes—you can accompany part of the way.

MOUS. Eh? Yes, yes, of course! (*pulling out his watch, and looking at it—then with pretended surprise*) Goodness gracious! I shall be too late for Mrs. Major-General Jones. (*he rushes out, L. D. F.*)

Enter MRS. MOUSER in her bonnet and shawl, L.

MRS. M. (*calling after MOUSER, whom she sees running out*) Mr. Mouser! Marmaduke! Call him back, cousin!

CRUM. It's no use my calling him back, my dear—he saw you coming.

MRS. M. And now leaves the house again, without saying a word.

CRUM. And without his usual “fond embrace before we part!”

MRS. M. Yes—but this is neglect—downright neglect—not that it matters to me.

CRUM. So I see. (*smiling*)

MRS. M. Mr. Mouser can go where he likes, and do what he likes—and so can I. We needn't interfere with one another in the slightest degree. I shall go to my sister's. If he chooses to come well and good. If not, I dare say I shall find some one *polite enough* to see me home! and you may tell him so. (*going*)

CRUM. Well, but Anastasia?

MRS. M. (*in a loud voice*) You may tell him so.

(*goes out L. D. F., slamming door after her*)

CRUM. But Anastasia? Stop! Hear me! I'll follow her—no, for if I do, I shall leave the coast clear for Mouser—confound it. I wish I hadn't interfered at all. So I'll find Betsy at once, and marry her off hand to Joseph Harris and the little greengrocer's shop. (*taking his hat, &c.*)

BETSY peeps in L. D. F.

BET. Sir! Sir! Are you alone, Mr. Crummy?

CRUM. (R.) You're the very young woman I wish to see.

BET. So are you, sir.

CRUM. I see—you've given him the slip, eh?

BET. Slip, sir! Who, sir?

CRUM. Mouser. Betsy, I'm afraid you've gone a little too far.

BET. (*drawing herself up*) You'll be good enough to remember, sir, that you are speaking to Betsy Baker? Didn't you insist on my making Mr. Mouser fall in love with me in downright earnest?

CRUM. Yes, yes.

BET. And ain't he in love with me in downright earnest?

CRUM. Yes, confound him!

BET. Very well, sir. Then I'll trouble you for the little greengrocer's shop at the corner of the street.

CRUM. Pooh! We'll talk about that some other time. (*walking about*)

BET. No, sir—now! now! (*following him*) I won't go out of the house, without the little greengrocer's shop at the corner of the street. I've worked hard for it!

CRUM. Pshaw!

BET. (*stopping*) Very well—then I know what I'll do—I'll fall in love with Mouser in downright earnest, too! He's a very nice little fellow, Mr. Mouser! Where is Mr. Mouser? (*in a loud voice and walking to and fro*) Where's Mr. Mouser?

CRUM. (*following her*) Hush!

BET. (*louder still*) I want my Mouser!

CRUM. Be quiet; you shall have the shop—but, on this condition—that you don't see Mouser again.

BET. Then you must tell him I can't come.

CRUM. Can't come, where?

BET. Here, in an hour's time. That's what I came to tell you about. He left Mrs. Mouser's veil at our place just now, and, when I opened it there was a letter inside!

CRUM. A letter?

BET. Yes, sir.

CRUM. From Mr. Mouser?

BET. Yes, sir, appointing me to meet him here.

CRUM. Why, then, the little profligate is really in love with her! And you read the letter?

BET. No, sir, I defy anybody to say they ever saw me read anything. So I gave it to one of our girls.

CRUM. The devil!

BET. No, sir, Big Charlotte—a red-haired young woman, on a large scale. Perhaps you've noticed her, sir?

CRUM. Pshaw! Go on.

BET. Well, sir, she read the letter out loud, at the top of her voice, sir—and she's a very powerful organ. Perhaps you've heard her organ, sir.

CRUM. Confusion! Then the contents of the letter—that Mouser had asked you to meet him here——

BET. Was known all over the laundry in a twinkling. Fancy thirty-seven female voices, including Big Charlotte's, crying out, "Lawks!" at the same moment? Of course, I was obliged to clear myself, which I did, by telling them the whole business! How it was to oblige you, that I was trying to make Mr. Mouser fall in love with me; because as how you promised to give the little greengrocer's shop at the corner of the street to the young woman that succeeded in captivating him.

CRUM. Well?

BET. Well, sir—the words were no sooner out of my mouth, than all the washing-tubs were deserted in a moment, and the whole of the thirty-seven girls—Big Charlotte included—seemed determined to set about captivating Mr. Mouser at once—and, as ill-luck would have it, he passed by the window at that moment, sir—and they all instantly rushed out after him, in a body.

CRUM. Zounds! There's a pretty piece of business! What'll become of him? Why the devil did I interfere? (*snatches up his hat and runs off*)

BET. But, sir! Mr. Crummy! Stop! Where's my shop? I insist on my shop!

(*great noise of WOMEN'S voices suddenly heard—"Stop, sir!" "Mr. Mouser!" "Don't run!" "It's only me!" &c.; Mouser rushes in at D. L. F., followed by WOMEN; after considerable trouble he turns them out again at door and slams it—noise of WOMEN'S voices repeated*)

MOUS. (*shouting at the door*) Go along! Females begone!

(WOMEN heard again at R. D., MOUSER runs and closes it)

MOUS. (*advancing*) What the deuce is the matter with the women? What are the poliee about? I pay the poliee rate—cheerfully and willingly pay it—because I can't help it. I provide a large body of men, not only with the necessaries of life, but with the luxury of an oilskin eape to proteet them from the inelemency of the weather—and yet in open day—walking slowly along the publie streets—I find myself suddenly overwhelmed by an avalanche of females! (*in a serious tone*) It's a retribution. Mouser, listen to me—you have a wife, Mouser—and yet, you first run after another woman: and now you have fifty women running after you, Mouser. It won't do, Mouser! (*sees BETSY*) Ah, Betsy!—so you're come, eh?

BET. No, sir, I ain't.

MOUS. Come, I like that.

BET. Well, if I have you sent for me.

MOUS. The faet is, I requested your presenee here—to—to—to—reason with you—on the—impropriety of your eonduct.

BET. Sir. (*aside*) If I was only sure of the shop, I'd bust out a laughing—but, as I ain't, I dare not. (*aloud*) I see how it is you want to break my heart.

MOUS. Hush! (*trying to pacify her*) You're wrong, Betsy, but you don't know what it is to have a young and lovely wife, Betsy.

BET. Yes I do.

MOUS. No you don't, and what's more, you probably never will. And so, Betsy—that is—I mean—I say—I mean—(*aside*)—I can't make up my mind as to what I *do* mean.

WOMEN heard again without.

MOUS. (*aside*) The women again! I'll go and shut the office door, for fear they should come in that way. (*goes off, R. D. F.*)

BET. (*suddenly leaving off sobbing*) I'm horribly afraid the little shop at the eorner of the street, will slip through my fingers at last. (*double knock at street door*) Oh, gemini! Who ean that be? What'll become of me?

MRS. MOUSER enters, L. D. F., followed by BOY.

MRS. M. Is Mr. Mouser at home?

BOY. No, ma'am.

MRS. M. Bring eandles.

BOY. Yes, ma'am.

(BOY goes off and returns immediately with candles, which he places on table, and then retires at back. BETSY makes her escape, and runs out L. D. F.)

MRS. M. Good gracious! What a commotion! There are at least thirty women round the door! I'm quite alarmed! I feel I was wrong to leave the house in a pet against Mr. Mouser. As for my Cousin Crummy's insinuations, I treat them with the utmost contempt. So, instead of spending the evening with sister Charlotte, I determined to return home, and give my poor dear affectionate little husband an agreeable surprise.

MOUS. (*from within*) Don't be impatient!

MRS. M. That's his voice. Who can he be speaking to?

MOUS. (*from within*) I'll be with you directly, Betsy.

MRS. M. Betsy! (*blows out candles, stage dark*) Oh! the monster!

Re-enter MOUSER from Office, R. D. F.

MOUS. How dark it is! Betsy! Where are you, Betsy? (*feeling his way*)

MRS. M. (*in an assumed voice*) Here!

MOUS. Where?

MRS. M. Here, you wretch! (*gives him a box on the ears*)

MOUS. Zounds! (*lays hold of MRS. MOUSER, in the struggle she takes off MOUSER's wig, and runs into room, L., shutting door in MOUSER's face*)

MOUS. Holloa! She's looked herself up, with my wig, in Mrs. Mouser's room. Betsy! Elizabeth! Miss Baker! Don't be absurd! Come out of that room—give me my wig! (*knocking and trying to open door*) Open the door! Open it this instant, or I'll overwhelm you with my indignation through the keyhole.

Enter CRUMMY from Office, with a candle.

CRUM. I can't find him any where. (*seeing him*) Holloa!—ha, ha, ha!

MOUS. Don't laugh, Crummy, look at me! She's here—I mean, she's there.

CRUM. Who?

MOUS. Betsy—in my wife's room.

CRUM. Ah! Any one with her?

MOUS. Yes, my wig. This is your doing—this is your preeious work. (*seizing CRUMMY and shaking him*) It was you—you who exposed me to the fascinations of this juvenile washerwoman. It's through you that I have lost my peace of mind, and my wig. Where are they? Where's my peace of mind? Where's my wig? (*shaking CRUMMY again violently*)

BETSY. (*who, during the latter part of MOUSER's speck, has entered L. D. F. and come down, L.*) Yes, and where's my shop?

MOUS. (*c.*) Exactly. Where's my shop—I mean—— (*sees BETSY*) Holloa!

BET. (*seeing MOUSER, and then bursting into a violent fit of laughter*) Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my! What a Guy! Ha, ha, ha!

MOUS. What d'ye mean by a Guy? (*suddenly recollecting. Snatches CRUMMY's hat out of his hand, and puts it on*) And how—how the deuce did you get out of that room?

BET. I never was in it!

MOUS. Ha, ha! That's right, Miss Baker! Stiek to it, Miss Baker! Perhaps you'll go so far as to say that it wasn't you who did me the honour just now of boxing my ears, and run away with my wig.

BET. (*L.*) Certainly not.

MOUS. Then who was it? I repeat, who was it?

MRS. M. (*entering at door, L.*) Your wife, sir!

MOUS. Anastasia! Crummy, take me away, and put me somewhere.

CRUM. (R. C., *aside to him*) Do as I do, and all will be right! (*aside to BETSY, and giving her a paper*) There's the lease of the little shop, back me in all I say.

MRS. M. Now, Mr. Mouser, what have you to say for yourself?

CRUM. (*suddenly bursting into a fit of laughter*) Ha, ha, ha! (*aside to BETSY and MOUSER*) Go it. Ha, ha, ha!

(MRS. MOUSER *enraged, walks up Stage, L.*)

MOUS. } (*laughing immoderately*) Ha, ha, ha!

BET. }

CRUM. Capital. Ha, ha, ha! (*holding his sides*)

MOUS. Delicious. Ha, ha! (*imitating him*)

BET. Glorious. Ha, ha! (*aside*) I wonder what I'm laughing at.

MRS. M. (L.) Mr. Mouser, I insist on your instantly explaining.

CRUM. He can't speak for laughing—can you, Mouser? (*nudging MOUSER, who is looking very serious*)

MOUS. (R. H.) No. (*bursting out again*) Ha, ha, ha!

MRS. M. (*to BETSY*) Young woman, speak this moment (*angrily*)

BET. (R. C., *alarmed*) Yes, ma'am. It's not my fault, ma'am, indeed it isn't—(*half crying*)—but you sec, ma'am. (CRUMMY *nudges her—then suddenly*) Ha, ha, ha!

CRUM. (*crosses L. C.*) I must explain after all, I see—Anastasia Mouser, not an hour since—and in terms as forcible as they were pathetic—you brought a grave and heavy charge against your husband.

MRS. M. (*aside to CRUMMY, and rapidly*) Hush!

CRUM. Yes, Anastasia Mouser—and that charge was, that he was "*too attentive by half*." It almost broke his heart. Didn't it, Mouser?

MOUS. (*affecting pathos*) As near as a toucher!

CRUM. But suddenly a smile lighted up his benevolent countenance—(MOUSER *smiles*)—and he said to me, "Crummy, I've an idea." Didn't you, Mouser?

MOUS. Yes, I distinctly said, "Crummy, I've an idea."

BET. I'll swear to it. I heard him.

MRS. M. (*suddenly*) I see it all.

MOUS. (*aside*) That's lucky. I'm damned if I do.

CRUM. And I determined to teach you this lesson—that the wife, who could complain of too much attention from a husband, could only be cured of her error by being led to suspect that that affection was bestowed on another. (*gets round behind to R.*)

MOUS. Exactly.

MRS. M. Then you have succeeded—for though, Marmaduke, you may love me a thousand times better than ever—I'll never complain again. (*embracing MOUSER*)

MOUS. On these conditions, I forgive you.

MRS. M. My dear Cousin Crummy, what do I not owe you?

CRUM. First, pay your debts here. (*taking BETSY by the hand*)

MRS. M. Oh, you were in the plot too?

BET. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. M. And who are you ?

BET. Betsy Baker as is—Mrs. Joseph Harris as will be.

Mrs. M. And how can I serve you ?

BET. By allowing me to serve you—the best of vegetables, and fresh oysters every day.

Mous. We'll certainly deal with you. Eh, 'Stasy ?

Mrs. M. But I'll go to market.

BET. (*to audience*) Do, ma'am—and I hope you will only be one out of many customers, at our new shop, where by a supply of the best articles we can get—joined with attention, civility, and moderate prices, we hope to secure the patronage of the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public in general.

CRUMMY.

BETSY.

MOUSER.

Mrs. MOUSER.

RIGHT.

LEFT

Curtain.

